

**SALINA ARTS & HUMANITIES COMMISSION**  
**January 18, 2006**

The monthly meeting of the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission was held at the Smoky Hill Museum Community Room at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 18, 2006. In attendance were Marilyn Benyshek, David Cooper, Trent Davis, Peggy DeBey, Randall Hardy, Luci Larson, Rachel Loersch, Linda Moore, Chelsey Mueller, Cheri Parr, R. Abner Perney, Linda Smith and Ted Zerger. Staff Present: Sharon Benson, Kathy Burlew, Carrie Carpenter, Brigid Hall, John Highkin, Glenda Johnson, and Karla Prickett. Also in attendance: Carmen Wilson, League of Women Voters and April Middleton, Salina Journal. Absent: Paula Wright.

Larson called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

**Focus Time: City Manager Jason Gage**

City Manager Jason Gage talked about how Arts & Cultural is important to him and his family and how it was part of the decision for their moving back to Salina. Arts and cultural sets Salina apart from other communities, helps attract new positions at the City – gives applicants identification with Salina – helps tell the Salina story. Gage really appreciates the work of the Arts & Humanities Commission and is very proud of what has been accomplished. Gage realized the conflict of opinions of renaming the Oakdale Stage. He sees himself as an insider and outsider but hopes that everyone walks away with the final decision without big scars. Public art has been an issue for a long time. When Gage was Assistant City Manager he worked with Martha Rhea on the CA&D guidelines but with his return has acknowledged there hasn't been too much progress with using the guidelines. Gage recognizes the work that Highkin, Prickett and staff have done on getting the revisions to the guidelines completed. During the process of working with the North Ohio Overpass and Water Plant public art projects, Gage has learned a lot on how much it takes to educate the public. When dollars are attached to a project there will always be emotions attached. Most important is to take the appropriate steps in educating the public. The City Commission is committed to public art in the community but would like to get the guidelines completed and approved. With the strong partnerships involving arts and cultural, Salina can do things usually very quietly.

Benyshek asked Gage how he plans to reach the community. Gage – talk about the arts being a part of normal life and continue to help the Community Theatre, Stiefel and Art Center. Benyshek – how would you approach reaching the regular people (non-arts audiences) to draw them into arts? DeBey – the River Festival for one thing – how people who haven't stepped foot on grounds? Gage – face same challenges with the City functions. Perception of arts and cultural as aloof, but it is offered to anyone and so we need to think outside the box to reach more people. Getting children involved and reach out with the kids. We do a lot but need more focus to get certain groups within the community involved. It's going to take time. We can't expect all people that we are trying to reach to come because people like it or don't like it. You can never satisfy people 100% where there are issues of like and dislike. The Municipal Court is

symbolic. With people going into the Municipal Court, part of the idea is distracting the people who

are entering the building (who may not like going there!), even if it is for a short period of time.

### **Minutes**

Smith motioned to approve the November 16, 2005 minutes and Benyshek seconded. Motion passed.

### **Minutes – Special Meeting 12-21-05**

No discussion on the special meeting with the Parks and Recreation December 21, 2005 meeting.

### **Staff Reports**

Benyshek – enjoys the idea of reaching out through the artist residencies to those students that don't get a lot of art opportunities outside of school. Benyshek would like to see a flyer or brochure sent to parents to explain the experience their children receive from the artist residencies. Benson says from experience, teacher's balk at extra paper work or comment that most papers don't get home to the parents. Benson - it's up to the teacher to get the message to the parents– stickers used to be used. Benyshek – flyers can announce what happens at the night time activity following a daytime residency. Benson – One way SAHC reached out to children and families was through Festival Families First, a new program for Festival '05. SAHC worked with 4 organizations last year to get buttons to appropriate families and sent flyers home with children. Larson – reaching children and families seems to be a world wide issue – commented on the commercial of “Asked Your Kids What They Learned Today?” Highkin – this is an ongoing communication to the public which we need to work on. It's a long-term equation.

### **Museum Update**

Highkin – second half of the gallery is really moving along. Big items were moved in on January 12<sup>th</sup> (with trustees from the jail). Staff is gathering artifacts and putting clothes on mannequins. The week of the 30<sup>th</sup> they will put the majority of the artifacts in the cases. The second half of the gallery should be open by mid-February. Grand Re-opening of the gallery is set for April 27-29<sup>th</sup>. Lots of activities are scheduled – donor recognition (April 27), keynote speaker (April 28) and entertainment for a community open house (April 29). More information to come. Gallery Renovation has been the focus of the Museum the last 6 or 7 years. Final 2 candidates for the Museum Director are scheduled for interviews. Loersch has been on the interview committee. Two members of the Friends Board – Gordon Fiedler and Joyce Volk. Bob Keckheisen from Topeka and Pam Harris from the Art Center as the community member. The Museum will have a whole new rhythm. This includes showcasing gallery and exploring new programs. We want to serve as a rich resource and provide programs that reach people academically (in the best sense of the word). Benyshek – Kansas Days? Highkin – yes, next week. – lots of activities. Black History month in February and Women's History in

March. Larson – The Museum Store? Highkin – sales were up in December, especially because of Christmas and the holiday open house.

### **Horizons**

Final Reports for developing artist Bev Lethem Davis grant # 04-01-120 was received. Benson read the letter that was sent to Davis regarding the lack of the public component. Davis has been asked to fulfill this obligation when/if completed book is accepted by a publisher. DeBey – appreciates the fact the report tells the Commission the experience gained was gratifying but very hard and was in fact a bumpy road. The Stiefel Theatre final report grant # 05-02-18 was also submitted. Larson distributed the support material.

### **Horizons Grant Review Meeting**

The Horizons Grant Review for the Project Organizational and Advancement Organizational grants will be Monday, April 10 at 4:00 p.m. Larson – eleven grants were submitted – distribution of the grants and request amounts were briefly discussed. Highkin made the critical point asking the Commissioners to arrive on time and keeping their schedules open for the evening of April 10.

Benson – Artist Award grants are due January 20. These grants will be handled through a panel process. The recommendations from the panel will be submitted to the Commissioners for approval.

### **Economic Impact Study**

Highkin reported on the American for the Arts *Economic Impact Study*. Salina is one of 100 communities that will participate in a national study of the economic effect of the nonprofit arts industry. The study is both local and national. One of the things the study will do for Salina is report on the indirect and direct economic impact of arts in the city. SAHC will be working with 16 cultural organizations and gather 50 surveys for each event for a total of 800 surveys. Some questions the survey will entail are: cost of the event, how many people in each participating party, dinner before or after the event, childcare cost. Activities being surveyed will take place in 2006 and then Americans for the Arts economists will put together a report by spring 2007. The report will be tailored to Salina showing the direct and indirect effect of Salina's nonprofit arts industry to the community. Highkin has talked to several cultural leaders who are really excited for the study to take place.

### **Other**

Davis asked what the status was regarding the renaming of Oakdale Stage. Hardy asked if the City Commissioners were still looking for input from SAHC. Perney commented there was a 60 day waiting period. Hardy – wasn't appropriate. DeBey – responsibility of City Commission? Highkin – yes, the re-naming or not is the responsibility of the City Commission. DeBey – receiving an email would be great. Highkin – will write out materials of the chronology of the stage for the City Commission. Larson – At the City Commission meeting, can people speak for and against? Highkin – all citizens are given time. Perney - Public hearing – this is a slightly different proposal. Highkin – another discussion and no action was taken at the joint meeting. Action of Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> stands.

Hardy – we were an after thought – all these people were ready to go. Smith – explained that she called for adjournment, and felt it (the decision in August) was a done deal because there is a split in SAHC. We have better and bigger things to handle. This is the City Commissioners' choice. Davis – needed a vote. Smith – getting drubbed through the papers, showing fighting with Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Davis – convinced that A&H could have changed its decision. Benyshek – gave us the time on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. Hardy – P&R wasn't asking for our input on the Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. Highkin – we attended on invitation of the City Manager. Hardy – didn't feel comfortable with sitting with P&R. Benyshek – a body felt we would have looked real poor to the public area, with Arts & Humanities in the newspaper (from Tom Bell) as looking petty. Split vote would have been a second time and we would have looked bad in the public eye again. P&R went through the re-naming process as specified. Davis asked if it had to be unanimous vote or do we look bad if it isn't? Highkin – it is what it is and everyone has a different point of opinion. Let's see what is important to us; each person can go to the City Commission meeting and voice his or her opinion—but as an individual, and not an A&H representative. A&H was a split vote and there probably wouldn't be a change. Cooper – he voted for it and is very ready to move on. Commissioners have a background of why the stage was named as is. Highkin – sorry for the disagreements and hard feelings that this has caused. Davis – is disagreement a bad state of affairs? You try to convince the other person and not shy away from disagreement. Hope that we can agree to disagree. Perney – City Commissioners of 4 people – Marrs made the motion the last time to table it indefinitely. This is a decision they are not wanting to make but now they will have to. Discussed long-term change in the P&R's naming policy.

Meeting closed at 5:45 p.m. for the Foundation meeting.

/kab